

I have been a licensed amateur radio operator since 1976, and currently hold an Advanced Class license, W0EPK. Over the decades, the FCC has slowly lowered the standards for licensure, by lowering/eliminating the code requirements, as well as issuing licenses to persons who memorize answers from your published test question pool. This has resulted in licensed operators who never learned the basic concepts of applicable theory, never learned proper operating procedures and who are unable to copy the Morse code identification of repeater stations.

The current low standards for licensure, has also resulted in the sloppy operating practices that are typical today. Monitoring the operations of stations who have entered the hobby on the no code and memorized theory basis, is a testimony to the degradation of the hobby. On a regular basis one can note FCC Rule infractions by these stations including ; Not identifying within 10 minutes - or at all, Whistling musical tunes, Purposely 'jamming' the transmissions of others, as well as vulgarities .

When I was first licensed, code was not only required, but it was the only mode allowed by a Novice class license. Additionally, the written test was one which required you to learn the required test material, not memorize published answers. This resulted in operators who first learned the proper radio procedures on Morse code communications, before upgrading their license, allowing operation on other modes. Since the entry level licensed required effort, it was earned and something to be proud of. Typically when one studied to enter the hobby, they also copied on air ham communications in Morse code, which taught proper operating procedures and etiquette. Operators rarely would violate FCC Regulations, and were far more respectful of their

If you eliminate the required code requirement, I see a further demise of the Amateur Radio Service, similar to the current Citizens Band Service. Citizen Band Radio Service was once set aside for business use, and was licensed. During that period, Citizens Band radio was a good use of spectrum, providing reliable, fairly interference free communications. In the 1970's, as the FCC relaxed the requirements to use the Citizen Band Radio Service, it declined into the cluttered and nearly useless spectrum of frequency usage that it is today. It is not in the best interest of this nation, to mismanage the existing Amateur Radio Service spectrum in a similar manner. I urge the FCC to not only maintain a minimum 5wpm code requirement for amateur radio licensure, but to consider applying higher code speed requirements for higher licensure levels, as well as reestablishing a code only Novice class, entry level license.